

REMARKS

The Office action of January 5, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully noted.

Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Claim 24 has been amended.

Claims 20-21, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukasawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,094,737) in view of Engbersen et al. ("Engbersen") (U.S. Patent No. 6,058,119) and Johannes et al. ("Johnannes") (U.S. Patent No. 4,914,655). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, and request allowance thereof in the continuation prosecution application for the following reasons.

The Claims are Patentable Over the Cited References

Claims 20-21, and 24 are not made obvious by Fukasawa, Engbersen, and Johannes

Claims 20-21, and 24 stand rejected under § 103(a) in view of Fukasawa, Engbersen, and Johannes. Applicants strongly contend that Fukasawa, Engbersen, and Johannes, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose the features recited in these claims such as a transmitter including a plurality of tributary circuits, each circuit for one of a plurality of signal paths, for assigning ✓
to individual tributary signals frame information and different ✓

identification codes without including section overhead information for a multiplex signal.

Fukasawa, the primary reference asserted, clearly does not disclose this patentably distinct feature of a plurality of tributary circuits, each circuit for one of a plurality of signal paths, for assigning to individual tributary signals frame information and different identification codes without including section overhead information for a multiplex signal. As admitted in the Action and in direct contrast to the claimed invention, Fukasawa solely discloses a path test generator system for handling synchronous transport modules (STM-Ns) that necessarily inserts section overhead information for the data transport (see FIG. 1; Abstract; col. 5, lines 3-7; col. 21, lines 56-59).

Particularly, Fukasawa discloses that "...a section overhead generating circuit for generating a section overhead that manages a section, and for in the section overhead...each multiplex section terminating circuit 320 generates...multiplex section overhead MSOH as in the synchronous transport module STM-1..." (see FIGs. 1, 7; col. 5, lines 3-7; col. 21, lines 56-58).

Therefore, clearly Fukasawa exclusively uses STM signals for multiplexing/demultiplexing that include section overhead information in contrast to the recited feature.

Similarly, Engbersen clearly does not disclose this patentably distinct feature of a plurality of tributary circuits,

each circuit for one of a plurality of signal paths, for assigning to individual tributary signals frame information and different identification codes without including section overhead information for a multiplex signal. In direct contrast to the claimed invention, Engbersen solely discloses an SDH/SONET interface circuit allowing a different protocol signal (e.g., ATM) to use the SDH/SONET transport system for transporting multiplexed data signals which necessarily includes insertion of section overhead information (SOH) for the SDH/SONET transport. (see FIGs. 3, 6-9; Abstract; col. 4, lines 21-23; col. 8, lines 30-36).

Particularly, Engbersen discloses that "...in accordance with the invention, the base module in its transmission (Tx) version comprises a POH insertion section, a SOH and AU-pointer insertion section...these interfaces...transmit the output of the B1 calculation section to the SOH insertion section (in the Tx module)..." (see FIGs. 3; col. 8, lines 30-35).

Therefore, Engbersen discloses performing section overhead information insertion in contrast to the recited feature as Engbersen must still perform this insertion to use the SDH/SONET transport medium for the different protocol signals (e.g., ATM). Prior to and after SDH/SONET transmission, Engbersen does disclose the different protocol signal not including section overhead, but this different protocol signal does not exist during multiplexed, tributary signal transmission as recited. Applicants strongly

contend that transmitting a multiplexed, tributary signal without section overhead information as recited is significantly different from a different protocol signal being generated or re-generated before or after multiplexed, tributary signal transmission with section overhead information included as disclosed by Engbersen.

Further, as implicitly admitted in the Action, Johannes does not disclosed the recited feature of a transmitter including a plurality of tributary circuits, each circuit for one of a plurality of signal paths, for assigning to individual tributary signals frame information and different identification codes without including section overhead information for a multiplex signal.

Therefore, it is clear that Fukasawa, Engbersen, and Johannes, either alone or in combination, do not disclose the recited feature making the claimed invention patentably distinct and non-obvious from the cited references.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks submitted above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the remaining claims are allowable and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any

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overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 to discuss the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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